

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1-31. (Cancelled)

32. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for sucking a function liquid droplet ejection head by bringing a cap into close contact with a nozzle surface of the function liquid droplet ejection head to thereby perform sucking of the function liquid droplet ejection head through the cap, the sucking being made for initial charging as well as for cleaning, the initial charging being performed for charging, with the function liquid, the function liquid ejection head constituted by an ink jet head which ejects the function liquid droplet, the and cleaning being made for removing the function liquid thickened inside of the function liquid droplet ejection head, the apparatus comprising:

an ejector which sucks, in fluid-flow communication with the cap, the nozzle which is ~~communicated~~ in communication with an inner passage of the function liquid droplet ejection head;

working fluid supply means for supplying the ejector with a working fluid;

pressure detection means for detecting a pressure in a suction pipeline connecting the cap to a suction port of the ejector;

a flow rate regulating valve for regulating a flow rate of the working fluid supplied to the ejector, the valve being interposed in a working fluid supply pipeline connecting the working fluid supply means to a supply port of the ejector;

a suction pipeline gate valve which is interposed in the suction pipeline and which opens/closes the suction pipeline; and

first control means for controlling the flow rate regulating valve based on a detection result obtained by the pressure detection means and for controlling the suction pipeline gate valve,

wherein the first control means closes the flow rate regulating valve and the suction pipeline gate valve when the suction of the function liquid droplet ejection head is finished.